

REMARKS

This preliminary amendment is being filed in response to an Office Action of February 4, 2003, which was issued in parent case 09/447,162, filed on November 22, 1999, which is being abandoned. The current application 10/633,911 is a continuation of U.S. Application 09/447,162, to which priority has been claimed.

The February 4, 2003 Office Action has been reviewed and the comments therein were carefully considered. Claims 1-17 remain pending in the current application. Claims 6-9 were objected to and claims 1-17 stand rejected. By this Preliminary Amendment, claims 6-9 have been amended. No new matter has been introduced into the application. Reconsideration and allowance of the instant application are respectfully requested.

Drawings

Figure 1 was objected to because the figure did not include reference signs to a “computer 20” and “RAM 25.” The attached proposed drawing correction to Figure 1 inserts the reference signs 20 and 25 for the computer and RAM, respectively.

Objections to Specification and Claims

The specification was objected to as containing minor informalities. The specification has been amended in the manner suggested by the Examiner. Claims 6-9 were objected to and have also been amended in the manner suggested by the Examiner. Reconsideration of these objections is requested.

Rejections under 35 USC § 102

Claims 1-17 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102 (e) as being anticipated by Thatte, et al. (US 6,442,620).

Applicants have corrected the inventive entity of this application through the filing of the current continuation application. The inventorship error occurred without deceptive intent in the parent case. In particular, the following inventors have been added to the current application: Richard D. Hill, Craig H. Wittenberg, Scott G. Robinson, Jan S. Gray, Rebecca A. Norlander, and Eric W. Johnson.

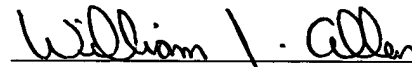
In addition, Applicants are submitting a Declaration under 37 C.F.R. 1.132 to remove the '620 patent from the prior art. This submission is being made without prejudice to any arguments that the claims are patentably distinct over the '620 patent. In particular, the declaration states that the inventors conceived of or invented portions of the '620 patent that were cited in the February 4, 2003 Office Action. Therefore, it is respectfully submitted that for at least the reason that the '620 patent is removed from the prior art, claims 1- 17 are allowable.

CONCLUSION

In view of the above Preliminary Amendments and Remarks, Applicants respectfully submit that each of the claims 1-17 now pending in the application contain patentably distinct subject matter over all of the references of record and are in condition for allowance. Allowance of claims 1-17 is respectfully requested. Should the Examiner believe that a conversation with Applicant's representative would be useful in the prosecution of this case, the Examiner is invited and encouraged to call Applicant's representative.

Respectfully submitted,

Dated: November 21, 2003



William J. Allen
Registration No. 51,393
BANNER & WITCOFF, LTD.
Ten South Wacker Drive
Suite 3000
Chicago, Illinois 60606
Telephone: (312) 463-5000
Facsimile: (312) 463-5001